

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks. By this amendment, claims 1, 2, 9, 21 and 22 have been amended, claims 3-8, 10-20 and 23-26 have been canceled, and new claims 27-30 have been added. Claims 1, 2, 9, 21, 22 and 27-30 are pending in the application.

Objections to the Drawings

Figures 4-7 stand objected to for lack of indication of flow from certain conditional blocks. Replacement drawings are attached to this response with amendments as suggested in the Office Action.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 5 stands objected to for being in improper dependent form. This claim has been canceled, rendering the objection moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103 in view of Pham and Bates

Claims 1-7, 10-24 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publ. No. 2003/0097591 to Pham et al. ("Pham") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,721,721 to Bates et al. ("Bates"). Claims 3-7, 10-20, 23-24 and 26 have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejections thereof moot. For reasons more fully set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed as to remaining claims 1, 2, 21 and 22.

Independent claims 1 and 21 have been amended to even more clearly define certain aspects of a verification service according to the invention. Independent claim 1, with similar subject matter in method form in claim 21, now explicitly requires, inter alia:

a web page object that is automatically rendered by a browser when a visitor uses the browser to access one or more web pages of the on-line service via a public network; and
a verification service that hosts and controls contents of the web page object, wherein the visitor is not required to take any action other than requesting access to the on-line service via the browser to receive the security status, and

wherein the verification service causes the contents of the web page object to be automatically rendered and displayed in accordance with its prior determination of a level of the security status, such that when the verification service determines, in a first verification operation prior to the visitor's access request, that the on-line service has a first level of the security status, it causes the web page object to have first contents, and when the verification service determines, in a second verification operation prior to the visitor's access request, that the on-line service has a different second level of the security status, it causes the web page object to have different second contents, and thereby automatically controls the visitor's perception of the different security status levels via the browser's automatic rendering of the prior-determined web page object contents when the visitor requests access to the on-line service. . . .

For example, independent claims 1 and 21 have been amended to clarify that a verification service hosts and controls the contents of a web page object that is automatically rendered when a visitor requests access to an on-line service. The contents of the web page object can be changed in accordance with the determined security status level. The security determinations are made prior to and independently from a visitor's request to access the service. Accordingly, all that is required for the user to view the up-to-date and prior-determined security status level is for the user to request access to the service via a browser. The security status level is automatically provided to the visitor by the browser's rendering of the web page object.

Neither Pham nor Bates teaches or suggests a web page object that is (1) automatically rendered when a visitor requests access to an on-line service (2) wherein the visitor is not required to take any action other than requesting access to the on-line service via the browser to receive the security status as explicitly required by amended independent claims 1 and 21. Accordingly, Pham and Bates fail to support a prima facie case of obviousness. See MPEP § 2143.03.

For example, Pham teaches a search engine that acts as a “screening service” to cancel access to a web page if the web page is listed as potentially containing a virus. This screening service includes a “virus site database system 116”. Pham’s list of virus web sites/pages do not teach or suggest a web page object as required by amended independent claims 1 and 21. Indeed, the Office Action correctly admits that “Pham doesn’t clearly suggest displaying an indication of the security status of the on-line service to the visitor. Pham also does not teach the visual

appearance of the indication is changed in accordance with a level of security computed for the on-line service.”

Bates describes a search engine like Pham’s that also performs virus checking, and provides virus status information along with search results “to assist in protecting a user computer from contracting a computer virus when accessing search results.” (col. 3, lines 10-12).

The Office Action relies on Bates’ Figure 8 and corresponding descriptions as allegedly providing a displayed indication of a security status of an on-line service to a visitor. However, these disclosures of Bates would not suggest a web page object that is automatically rendered when a visitor requests access to an on-line service such that the visitor is not required to take any action other than requesting access to the on-line service via the browser to receive the security status as explicitly required by amended independent claims 1 and 21.

Rather, as clearly shown in Figures 7 and 8 and reproduced below, in a search operation performed by a visitor, before even knowing the identity of a relevant website, the visitor has to first explicitly launch a search of websites from a “search engine 40” via the Internet, and has to explicitly request a report of whether the sites matching the search results contain a virus.

FIG. 7

FIG. 8

Only after explicitly requesting a virus report, and seeing the search results displayed by the search engine as well as any corresponding virus warnings generated by the search engine,

can the user then decide whether or not to request access to any of the on-line services listed in Figure 8.

Because Pham and Bates do not teach or suggest all the limitations of amended independent claims 1 and 21, they fail to support a prima facie case of obviousness. MPEP 2143.03. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 21, as well as claims 2 and 22 that depend respectively therefrom, should be withdrawn for at least this reason.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103 in view of Yoshirua, Arent and Bunker

Claims 8, 9 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pham and Bates and further in view of U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/00228803 of Bunker V et al. ("Bunker"). Claims 8 and 25 have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejections thereof moot.

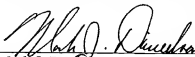
Remaining pending claim 9 ultimately depends from claim 1, and so is patentable over Pham and Bates for at least the reasons presented above. The further addition of Bunker to this alleged combination would not cure the deficiencies noted above. Indeed, the Office Action only alleges that Bunker teaches determining a security status of an on-line service by evaluating vulnerability scans of the service. Bunker contains no teaching or suggestion of hosting or controlling contents of a web page object that is rendered automatically by a browser when a visitor requests access to the on-line service. Accordingly, claim 9 is patentable for at least the reasons claim 1 is patentable.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition of allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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